

## Henry Tazewell to Andrew Jackson, July 20, 1798, from Correspondence of Andrew Jackson. Edited by John Spencer Bassett.

### HENRY TAZEWELL TO JACKSON.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Tazewell was U. S. senator from Virginia 1794–1799. This letter is a fair summary of the Republican argument in 1798.

Philadelphia, July 20, 1798.

*Dear Sir:* I have to beg your pardon for not acknowledging the receipt of your Letter sooner, but the result of the Session was so uncertain, and the intelligence from Europe so various, that I hoped by the time of our adjournment I should be able to give you an account that would at once be full, and satisfactory. In this expectation I have been in part disappointed. still I will not longer delay to gratify an anxiety, which I had promised to allay.

Congress adjourned on Monday last the 16th. previous to the adjournmt. the President summoned the Senate to meet on the 17th. for executive purposes. I need not recite to you what had been done before you left us. Those things are within your recollection. The most material acts after you left us, were acts for increasing the regular military establishment about 12,000 men.<sup>2</sup> The provisional army Bill had passed before you went away, of 10 000 men, so that between the two we may have an army of between 22 and 25 000 men, over and above the present establishment. Besides this, Volunteer Corps from the militia to any amount may be accepted by the President upon the footing of the provisional army. The naval force ordered when you left us amounted to about 12 ships in

<sup>2</sup> The law raising an army of 10,000 men was approved May 28, and the law authorizing twelve additional regiments was approved July 16. It was between these two dates that

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Jackson left Washington. The Knoxville *Register* of Oct. 9 , 1798, has this note: "Andrew Jackson, the same who was a senator of the United States, is appointed and has accepted the office of one of the Judges of the Superior Court of law and equity, for the State of Tennessee. While his fellow citizens have to lament the loss of his abilities in the Senate, they have a consolation of hoping for his long continuance in his present honorable and important office".

addition to those formerly provided. We have increased the President's power to accept and to build or purchase other Vessels, until the whole naval force may now amount to about 60 sail of Vessels large and small. This is the amount of the force provided by the present Session. The expence of it, to speak only from the legal approp[ri]ations is—1,500,000 to be drawn from the surplus of former revenues—2,000,000, to be raised by a direct tax on Lands and Houses and Slaves—and the amount of the stamp tax which is uncertain, but which may amount to 2,000 000 more, and to make up the deficiency the President is authorized to borrow 5,000,000, dollars without any limitation of interest, so that our whole appropriations will be between 10, and 12,000,000 dollars. This is by no means calculated as sufficient to meet the expenditures. It was thought better by the rulers, to trust to the next Congress to provide for deficiencies than to create an alarm by present appropriations.

In this view of things the proposed war with France in the outset will cost the U States, almost as much as their trade is worth. It is a War intirely for the defence and protection of Commerce. The whole export trade of the U States for the year 1787 amounted to about 51,000,000 dollars. Of this Massachusetts, New York Penn[s]ylvania, Maryland and Virginia exported 46,500,000 dollars, leaving the export trade of the residue of the States to amount only to 4 500,000 dollars. Take their proportion of the direct tax necessary to raise this money, in the outset, and it will be greater than the whole amount of the trade, and if the War continues two years, than the whole amount of the whole trade for which it was entered into. Thus the aggricultural and manufacturing interests are made tributary to the mercantile interest, which at best is but transitory and fleeting.

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You know the state of party spirit which existed here before you left us. The negotiation with France, was always calculated on by the Republicans, never calculated on by the opposite party. Whether any secret determinations to defeat it, had been entered into by the latter, or whether it had not been sincerely begun in the first instance are questions which some must solve. You have seen the various communications made by our Envoys and finally the result so far as we know it is, that Gerry remains accredited in France as the Minister of the U States, and Marshall and Pinkney have been discharged.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>3</sup> Pickering's despatch recalling the three commissioners, Marshall, Pinckney, and Gerry, was dated Mar. 23, 1798, and was received in Paris May 18. Gerry's continuation was of his free will and contrary to his instructions.

The last advices we have induce a belief that Gerry will make a Treaty, but the Conduct of the President in his answers to addresses, and the Conduct of Congress pending the negotiation, leave no hope that even an advantageous Treaty made by Gerry, will have the effect of preventing the calamities of a War. Congress in their rage for War, have cut off all commercial intercourse with the ports of France, and have formally annulled our subsisting Treaties with that nation. They have authorized captures of the armed ships of France, both by our public and private Vessels, and already this authority has been executed, so that if Gerry makes a Treaty, it will not probably be here confirmed, or if confirmed our subsequent Conduct when known in France must prevent its ratification there. Under any event, war appears to be unavoidable, and a dreadful war it will be.

Our example is now in the annals of the world, pending a negotiation, and whilst every reason existed to induce a belief that one of our Envoys at least would make an accommodation we have hurried ourselves into a War, which is now inevitable. Step by step Congress have been led on to warlike measures, when a majority were in truth agt. a Declaration of War, for it would at last have been declared if a majority could have been found to favour it. Two measures only have been omitted to consummate the plan which was formed. The one an open declaration of War, the other a british alliance. A majority

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could not be procured for the first, and it was believed by the minority that enough had been done to produce a War without an open Decln on our part, and hence they became less anxious for an open Declaration. A british allyance was earnestly desired by some, but the more considerate of that party considered it as a thing which must necessarily result from a war with France, and that in proportion as we were threatened with danger from France, the desired allyance would become more apparently necessary, and of course more popular, and that it was better to leave it thus to be brought on than by openly beginning with it. With these views we have for the present escaped these two acts. But I still consider both as impending over us, and as scarcely possible to be avoided.

The war party dreading that the expences, created, the expected calamities of a War, and the general unpopularity of their views might turn the tide agt. them, deemed it necessary to banish all foreigners who were here under republican principles, and to suppress the liberty of the press. Accordingly they passed an Alien Bill, and a sedition Bill. By the former, they authorized the President to banish any suspected alien. By the latter, they created heavy penalties for traducing the President and the acts of the Government, so that the freedom of censuring their measures was silenced whilst Porcupine and Fenno were permitted to utter every species of abuse agt. those who defended the Constitution, or clamoured at the measures of the Government. The papers and public acts will shew you these Bills, in which you will read the Death blow to State authority over the migration of foreigners, and to the freedom of the press. In vain was the Constitutional restraints on power urged agt. these measures. Our politic situation therefore at the close of the present Session of Congress stands thus. An army and navy under the unbridled will of the President—Money to support both—The freedom of political discussion abolished, or placed in a situation to be suppressed by this very force.

Having voted these measures Genl Wasshington was appointed to the Command of the army, Alexander Hamilton Inspector Genl. Chs C. Pinkney and Genl Knox Major Generals of the regular forces, Gen Brooks, Colo Wasshington, Jonath Dayton, Brigadeer Genls. in the regular army, H. Lee and Genl Hand Majr Genls of the provisional army,

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Ebenezer Huntington, Anthy W. White, Genl Davy, and Gov Severe Brigadeer Generals in the provisional army. Genl. Wassington accepted his appointment by a Letter which I now send you. His approbation of Mr Adams's administration, and of the measures which have been persued agt. France, puts every hope of an amicable adjustment of our differences at an end, and leaves us nothing to expect but a dreadful War. Thus equipped internally we have only to turn our attention to the situation of Europe, in order to form some tollerable conjecture of our fate.

France is triumphant over all Europe except G Britain. Every appearance of internal disquiet in that nation is at an end, and all the Continental powers of Europe seem to hold their existence at the pleasure of France. Her whole forces and resources are engaged agt. England. The Contest between them is a Contest of political principles. One or the other must be annihilated, both cannot survive the Storm. Either monarchy or Republicanism must be rooted out of Europe, or the War will not cease. If England succeeds, Monarchy will become more formidable then ever to the liberties of mankind, for having Conquered its Enemy, there will be nothing left but to secure itself agt. future opposition of the same kind by tyrannizing over mankind. If France succeeds liberty will at least for a time be emancipated from the despotism of Kings.

What turn the Revolution will take, cannot be exactly foreseen. Some suppose that the object of France is universal domination and plunder, and that if she triumphs, the World will be no more free than before. This is but a speculative opinion, and I confess I cannot bring myself to believe that men who have begun so great a Revolution in favour of human rights will end it by becoming the greatest Tyrants in the World. At best it is but attributing to France, what would certainly be the effect of the success of Royalty, and as it is doubtful to say the least whether the French Revolution would take this turn, its success will certainly abolish an indubitable evil, when it may possibly turn to the universal benifit of the human race. It is not difficult to foresee that when we take a part in this War, ours must also become a War of political principles. If by uniting with G B we should assist the triumph of Kings over France, we enable them to triumph over republicanism every

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where, for this is her Enemy, and it is immaterial where she finds it. Her object must and will be to suppress it. Whilst then we are complaining of injuries to our Commerce, we are feeding a power whose interest it is to devour our political Tenets, we are waring with a power whose interest it is to support them. But what is to be done? Here is the awful question. If in America we had no men desirous to subdue the spirit of Republicanism, I should not fear a War for Commerce, or any other national injury from any foreign power. But if Commerce is to lead us into a Contest which may subvert our best rights, I had rather see that Commerce totally annihilated. By uniting with England we do not better our commerce, and we endanger our political principles. We provoke France to a situation, in which if she subdues England exposes us to the double horrors of War, and we loose the reputation of a friendship which ought to be cemented by a reciprocity of interests. I could dilate much more largely on this subject, but my time will not permit it, and it is a subject perfectly familiar to you.

I see one desireable remedy for us, and that is by a republican Congress of the choice of the people. We have so many instances of defection by means of the Executive patronage, by means of private views, and personal considerations that the people cannot be too cautious whom they elect. I pray you to exert your self in the attainment of this object. A Hint is sufficient with the knowledge you possess of our real interests. I find by Letters to this place that your return home from Congress is used for the purpose of destroying your influence in Tenessee. I do not know if you are apprized of it. Had you been here you could not have altered the state of things, and I hope you will do more good where you are. But pray attend in time at the next Session, and let us have men equally disposed with yourself to work in the cause of Republicanism. I write to you in the fullest confidence. I hope you will not expose my remarks nor suffer an improper use to be made of them. I shall be proud to hear from you whilst I am at home, and if I meet with an oppy I will write you again from thence. Until I see you I beg you to be assured that you have no more sincere friend than

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Yours